

THE PARADE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Seniors miss their shot at getting vaccinated

By Katie Costello
Oracle Editor

A new county enforcement indirectly led to the extension of winter break for certain seniors.

Seniors were not allowed to come to school January 3 if they had not yet given WS proof of receiving the Hepatitis B vaccine.

Letters at the beginning of the school year were sent to students whose records for the shot needed to be turned in, followed by several more right up until the deadline for proof of immunization.

"In mid October I got my first letter for my Hepatitis B shot," said senior Zohra Alnoor. "I got two more before winter break also, but I kept procrastinating."

Not being allowed to come to school, although seemingly a pleasant thought, was an inconvenience for students who would be missing an important class or who were unable to turn in an assignment.

"I went to my teacher January 3 because I had to turn in a project, and I told her I wasn't suppose to be here," said Alnoor. "So I just dropped off the project and went home."

A memo was sent to teachers stressing the importance of accurate attendance. The Attendance Office checked the absentee lists 30 minutes into every class to make sure that seniors who came to school that were not supposed to were pulled out of class and sent home.

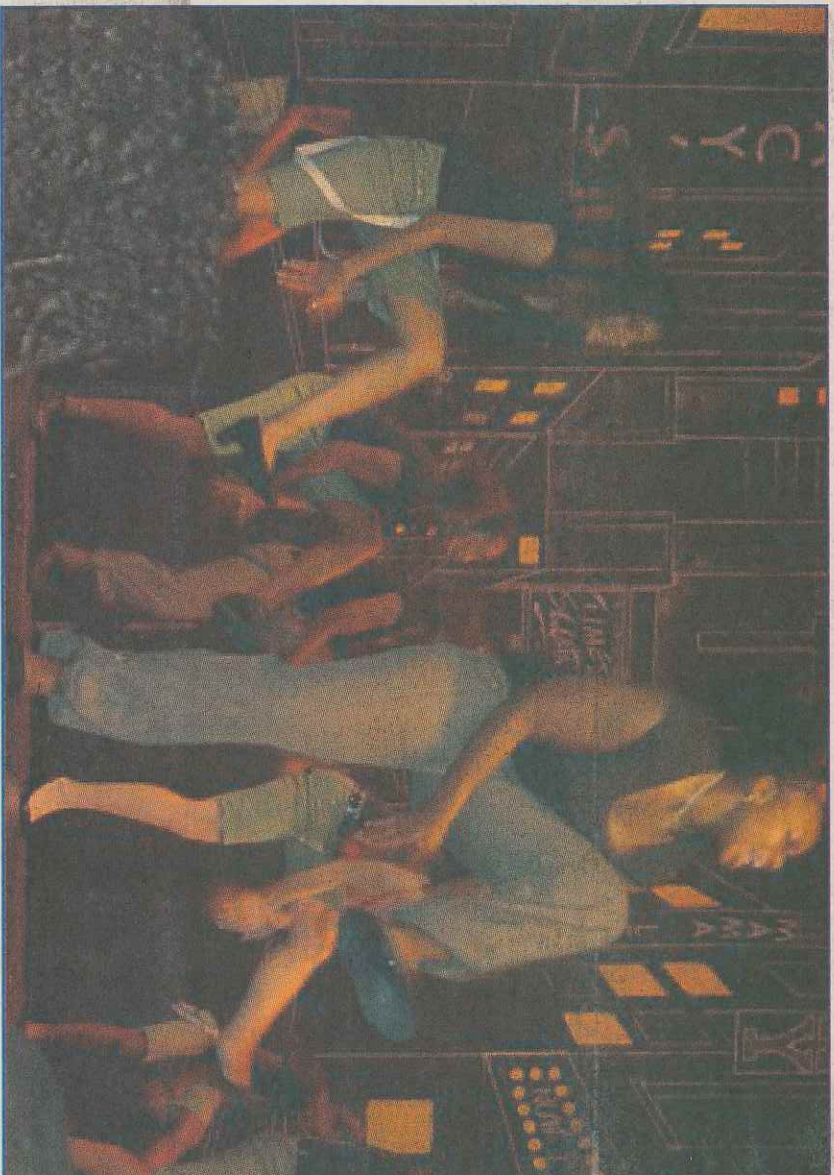
"[They [guidance] sent me a pass telling me I had to go to guidance," said senior Ryan Yohe. "They had my name on a list and told me not to come back to school until I had my shot."

See VACCINE on Page 5.



Larissa Cookson

Senior class officer Ryan Yohe, an active member of the student body, helps a mother at back to school night. Yohe was asked not to come back to school until she got her Hepatitis B shot.



The Step Team performs for students at WS' Homecoming Assembly before some members quit the team. *Amanda Locke*

'Dynasty' takes a step backwards

By Bethel Habte
News Editor

WS' step team is renounced for their intricate bears and hard-to-follow moves on the auditorium stage. At the last Homecoming assembly, students agree that "Dynasty" stole the show but the team is in danger of dissolving because of internal problems.

What led the team's captain, junior Radwa Wahba, to declare the team temporarily terminated were events that followed the Homecoming assembly. Up to that point, Wahba and other members of the team were pleased with their performance.

"Homecoming was great. We worked hard and there were a lot of eclectic people on the team," said Wahba. "But it just sort of dived after that."

Wahba held two practices after the assembly but

See DYNASTY on Page 5.

Come on, get happy!

New club works toward a brighter WS

By Chrissy Regelski
Oracle Editor

No student has a happy morning when they have to trudge out of bed to go to school at sunshine-less 7:30 am. The new Happy Morning Sunshine Club, however, is working to combat WS' lackluster mood and has been a surprising smash success.

Over 50 students attended the Happy Morning Sunshine

Club's first meeting and their ranks continued to grow to a staggering 74 members after the second.

"I thought 20 people would show up and I would know them all," said senior Ian Mahoney, the president and founder of the Happy Morning Sunshine Club. "But like a bunch of random people came."

Mahoney arbitrarily strung a few words together in English. See CLUB on Page 4.



Molly Cushing

The new Happy Morning Sunshine Club members laugh together at a meeting.

When at WS, do as the Romans do

By Jake Serwin
Etc. Editor

The cafeteria walls were bathed in the glow of purple lights as a toga-clad challenger hurled stuffed baseballs at a wooden lion.

While hardly authentic, this Roman-themed game was part of an effort to bring fun to a language often thought of as tedious and dull. The

Latin classes held a Saturnalia carnival in celebration of the Roman holiday on December 19 with a number of goals in mind. Bringing the so-called dead language to life was one of them.

"There's the conception that Latin is stuffy," said Latin teacher Jeanne Burns. "But the Romans had a lot of fun, and we had a lot of fun." See SATURNALIA on Page 5



3 The points and pains of Paintball.



11 Girls Basketball aims to score big this season.



12 Jake encounters San Fran.

PDA crowds hallways

Students feel uncomfortable in the school environment

By Krista Pedersen
Scoop Editor

It is rather disturbing to me that each day I return to my locker during break and see the same couple making out two feet away.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for displays of affection, just in places where I am not.

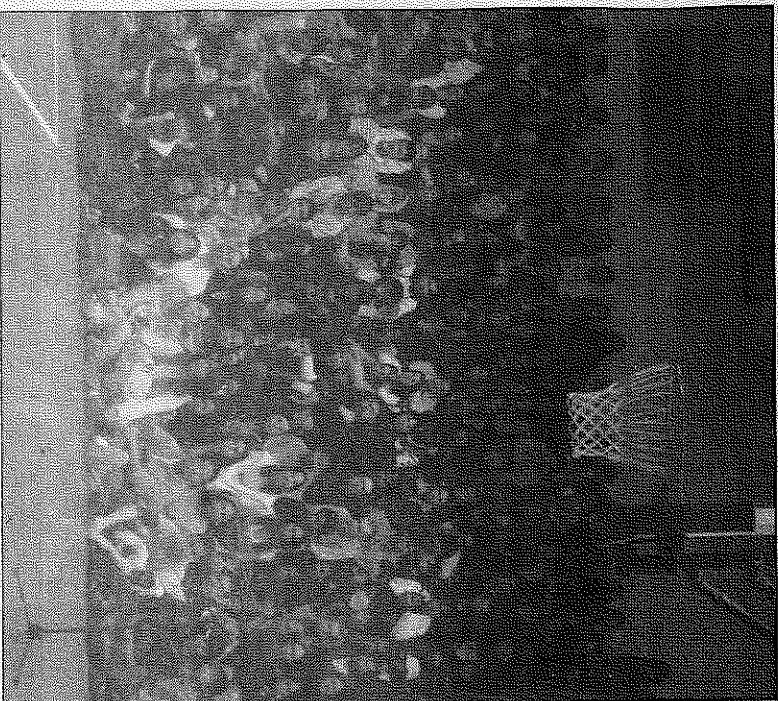
I'm not pride at all; I just like school to be a comfortable environment. Having to avert my eyes while walking past a couple making out at the bottom of a staircase is the opposite of comfortable.

It seems to me that there is an increased level of PDA this year from last year. Although the same upperclass couples still like each other, the freshmen seem to be the friendliest. On the occasion when I am forced to walk down the long freshman hall, I am usually stalled by the large congregations of other students stalled

by various couples pressed together against the lockers. This reminds me of Irving, I did not like Irving. To all the freshmen, please stop reminding me of Irving.

Our school's overall behavior at Homecoming was a good example of everything I am saying. Grinding (or trying unsuccessfully to) may feel good, but it does not look good. Please do that, and everything else, in private. I feel very bad for all of the parents and faculty who volunteered to chaperone that dance. Letting them know that WS girls are willing to do anything, absolutely anything, if the song has the words "back it up" is not a good indicator of our overall future.

I would like to reiterate that it does not bother me that you are doing these things, just that I am seeing it. And to the couple I first mentioned, I realize that my end locker is convenient for you, but please find someone with an end locker who liked you to begin with.



Molly Cushing

The highly spirited senior class waits quietly in anticipation for the tug-of-war competition with the junior class.



Public Displays of Affection have become such a common practice, some students dread to think what will happen next.

Caillin Kenney

Class rivalry dominates WS

We often hear how much WS "sucks," yet at virtually every football game, students come decked out in orange and blue body paint flaunting their graduation year.

It's demonstrated on the girls' bathroom stalls how much they "hate" WS, and how "gay" WS is. Are these the same girls guilty of freezing at the football games in sports bras? Class rivalry seems to be taking over WS' school spirit, and it is slowly becoming the student body's main concern.

It was evident at our most recent winter sports pep rally, during the tug-of-war battle between freshman and sophomores, and juniors and seniors, when both the junior and senior classes were so enthusiastic about the

competition that they flooded out of the stands to compete. It used to be that only juniors and seniors would "compete" in class spirit, but now the sophomore and freshman classes are making their way into the mix, joining in on the

Editorial

WS class rivalry. Not only is class rivalry dominating school spirit, but the school spirit we had to begin with is nearly extinct. Some argue that our school is slightly smaller than others in Fairfax County or not as decorated or not as clean as other schools, but who is it that is responsible for how clean and nice our school is? Not the teachers, not the juniors, and not those who

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The Caitlin and Beth Show goes paintballing

By Beth Stinson

Viewpoint Editor

On the frigid autumn morning of November 27, we set out. Pried early from our beds, we met at Caitlin's rendezvous point for a briefing and uniform check. Bagels were served. Clad in Mr. Kenney's oversized desert BDU's, we boarded our assigned vehicles and the convoy headed to Pev's Paintball Park in Leesburg, Virginia.

Our platoon arrived at approximately 0900 hours. We were met by a legion of pubescent boys, all very, very serious about paintball. Each one silently mocking us,

outfitted in professional paintball regalia and armed with the latest technology in paint-shooting weaponry. They thought we were a joke. We thought we were a joke.

But that all changed. Friends became mortal enemies, and acquaintances became sisters of war. Our group of once pleasant friends was split, white team against blue team. Marked with electric tape on our right arms, the two teams, once pacifistic girly-girls, transformed into killing machines.

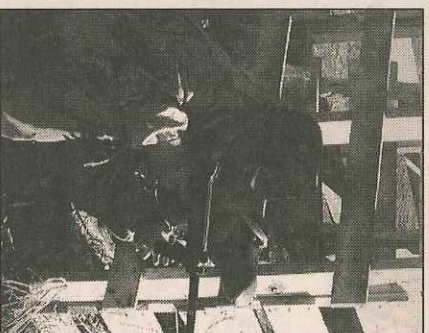
Our first mission was a disaster for both teams. The blue team was ordered to advance on an upward position

and capture the white team's flag. Casualties abounded. Beth was shot in the face, but before giving her life in the field of battle, shot Caitlin in the neck.

Tired of this, we then were deployed to the "Winter Woods," for a two-flag mission. We must mention here that the white team had the unfair advantage of having "Uncle," Caitlin's 40-year-old Uncle Mac, who played paintball for the University of Maryland. This man was ruthless. His multi-thousand dollar gun shot pink golf ball-sized bullets that maimed whoever they hit.

The Winter Woods is where things really got serious. Kelly and Beth became bound by the eternal sisterhood forged only by faithfulness and loyalty during combat. Sarah and Caitlin, however, used Uncle as a shield as both teams came to death grips on the forested field. Beth shot Uncle in the chest at close range as he ambushed Kelly in her position behind a pile of sandbags. A proud moment.

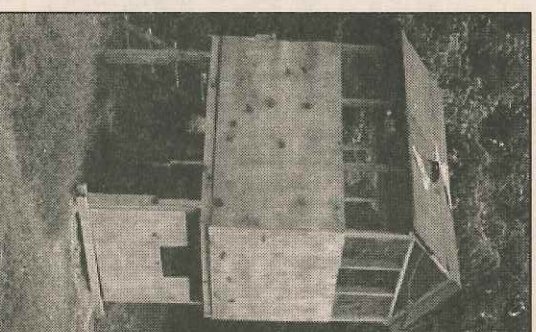
By the time we reached "The Castle," alliances and complex strategies had been formed. Aided by our guide, Paul, Kelly and Beth crept along the outskirts of the field.



Richard Kenney



Richard Kenney

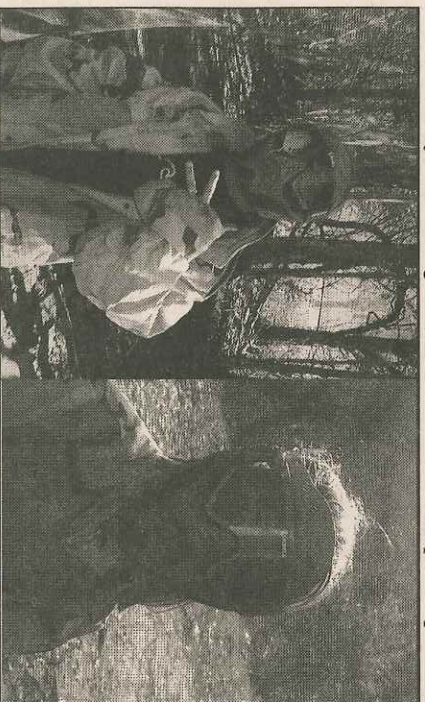


Pev's Paintball

Picking off numerous opponents, our killing spree ended when Kelly was cornered by Marie, a soon-to-be West Pointer. She opened fire mercilessly on Kelly, writhing on the ground. Avenging the death of her sister, Beth assaulted Marie and landed about 70 rounds on her. Beth turned around, seeing Rosemary Barber attempting to steal the flag. After taking her out, Beth ran for the flag, and with the flimsy thing clutched in her tiny fingers, she ran to the woods, where she slipped on mud and ran into a tree.

Finally, we arrived at "Dodge City," a capture-the-flag course simulating urban warfare. Kelly and Beth took up arms and vowed death upon Uncle, who had shot Beth in the back of the head as she ran away crying "UNCLE, UNCLE!" The battle raged on, both teams fought valiantly.

As we bandaged our wounds and filled our weary bodies with leftover bagels, we regaled each other with heroic tales of war and friendship. The girly-girls had become rugged and battle-hardened, and eager to go paintballing again.



Richard Kenney

Beth (left) and Caitlin (right) are photographed after becoming casualties of Paintball War. You should always wear your goggles.

A family feud over New Year tradition

By Jake Serwin

EtC: Editor

New Year's resolutions help us feel better about ourselves, if only for a month.

Throughout the year we accumulate all sorts of vices, imperfections and felony charges. The coming of a new year, however, is a great time to improve ourselves.

For most human beings, finding the motivation to change our lifestyles for the better is difficult. Personally, I spend at least twice as much time justifying my own laziness as I spend fixing my problems.

The new year, however, brings with it a clean slate. With this fresh start, why not get rid of all the mistakes of the last year or two or twelve? Everyone else is doing it, and bowing to peer pressure is always the best course of action.

I have yet to meet a living person who has remained true to his or her resolutions conditions. If you claim that you actually adhere to your vow of self-improvement for the whole year, you should resolve to stop lying. Giving up on resolutions, however, is not to be criticized.

It pleases our arrogant minds to think about how we're going to lose ten pounds or do all of our homework or sell our extensive collection of giraffe pelts. There is nothing wrong with pretending to be better, more self-aware people than we actually are. I do it all the time. Right now, in fact. Disappointing ourselves come February is totally worth the "I'm so great because I can improve myself" glee that resolutions bring. According to a study by a university somewhere, the amount of happy particles released into the



Associated Press

Young children meet their end as Fa-robust years. Jake and Jordy celebrate the new year much the same way.

brain on the first of January is triple the mass of the sad particles released one month later. My resolution: stop making up statistics.

For a brief moment (or about two weeks in January), New Year's resolutions allow us to feel constructive and driven — it's a good feeling. Nine times out of ten, this is completely incorrect, but it's only two weeks. See? I already broke mine.

Oracle Siblings Jake (left) and Jordy (right) face off Star Wars style.

By Jordy Serwin
Oracle Editor

Of all the ridiculous New Year traditions, New Years resolutions are by far the silliest. I have no problem with people poorly singing "Auld Lang Syne" though I don't understand the words. I also take no issue with staying up until midnight to collectively welcome the New Year with fellow human beings. Streamers, noisemakers, and those plastic champagne bottles with the strings on the end that explode are fun (until someone loses an eye). Dick Clark, pre or post stroke, and the big, shiny, glass ball dropping at midnight isn't even so bad when the sound on the TV is muted. New Years resolutions, however, are a lousy tradition.

People shouldn't wait until New Years to promise themselves that they will make beneficial changes in their lives. If a person feels something is bad enough to change, they should change it as soon as the need or motivation

arises. Waiting until New Years needlessly prolongs habits, dependencies, addictions, etc., and waiting can only make something bad worse.

For example, waiting to throw away the grotesque brisquet-flavored yogurt Uncle Herschel brought from Gadam is a bad idea. Aged brisquet yogurt morphs from a simply icky desert item into a Four Seasons for insect larvae. Not that I have a problem with insect larvae, or have an Uncle Herschel. I just don't believe bad habits or bad foods should be kept a moment longer than they have to be.

Another flaw in New Years resolutions is that nobody keeps them, and breaking promises is inherently bad. If you break a promise you've made to a Mafia boss, you end up with a horse's head in your bed. This is bad for all involved, particularly the horse. Most of the horses I've ever met have redeeming qualities, except for Diablo, but that was an isolated incident.

Finally, New Year resolutions are bad because they are chronologically arbitrary. It just doesn't make sense to tie life changes to a particular day on the calendar. Change should be voluntary and logically related to some trigger other than a particular date.

In all seriousness, New Year resolutions are passé and unnecessary. I do realize old habits are difficult to break, so my advice is this: make a New Year resolution to stop making New Year resolutions. Use the time you would have spent resolving and breaking a resolution productively, perhaps by learning the real words to "Auld Lang Syne." That way if you've got no one to kiss at the stroke of midnight, at least you won't sound as stupid as everyone else.

Facilities get a facelift

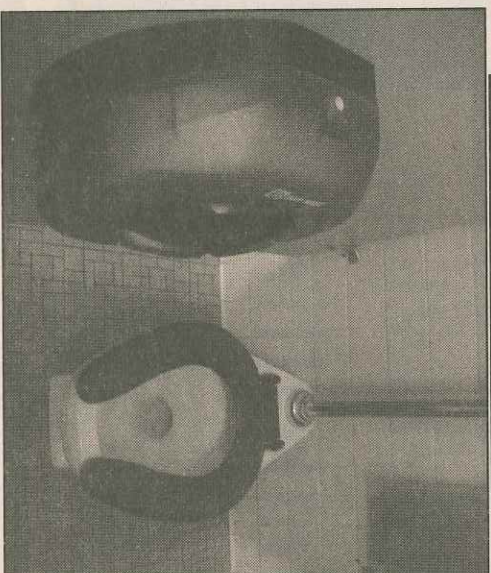
By Krista Pedersen

Scoop Editor

Although WS bathrooms are still less than sanitary, they now boast new paper towel and toilet paper dispensers. There are also several new Coca-Cola machines, located in the sports lobby and the hallway outside of the auxiliary gym.

"I actually haven't noticed that we have new [vending machines]," said junior Melissa Finkelstein. "I buy Chex Mix and that's all."

The new machines were put in partly because some of the old Pepsi machines were malfunctioning. The drinks are sold in bottles, instead of the cans Pepsi used, which caused a price increase. Cafeteria manager Trish Kidwell says the price increase has caused a downward trend on sales, especially at the machines near the auxiliary gym.



Molly Cushing

New toilet paper dispensers are one of the many facilities that have been recently added.

"[But] we have to prioritize this with all the other stuff we have to buy."

In the meantime, WS will have to be content with the new dispensers. Although only a slight improvement, they have been functioning so far.

"Hopefully there's less using [the bathrooms] inappropriately," said Brandt. "I haven't heard that there have been any major issues [with them]."

"Prices did have an effect on our sales. What students don't know is the school actually gets half of the profit [from the machines]," said Kidwell. "The machines don't actually belong to us."

Students have had a mixed reaction to the new machines. Some are happy to have the Coke, while others, are upset about the price increase.

"Gatorade is a dollar-25 now. I don't have a \$1.25," said Kauffman.

The new paper towel and toilet dispensers were put in because of a county-wide mandate to make school bathrooms look better. All FCPS high schools received new dispensers, at no cost to the schools.

"There are a multitude of bathroom issues," said sophomore administrator Becky Brandt. "[The installation of the new dispensers] gives a sense that things are being taken care of."

Although eliminating the chance someone will ever run out of toilet paper, the new dispensers also draw attention to the other problems this school has with bathrooms. Three out of four stalls will not shut in the girls foreign language bathroom. Brandt says that a request has been put in for minor repairs to the bathrooms. She does not know if the request has been returned yet, or whether WS will be able to fund it.

"It's not like we're going to debate the fact that they do or don't close- they don't close," said Brandt.

New club brings smiles and gundrop houses

HAPPY from Page 1.
distinctive name, fit only for a club with a purpose just as unique.

"The point of the club is you have all these clubs who say let's help the poor or people without coats or people with only three fingers," said Mahoney. "And I say do you really want to help those people when you're not happy yourself? Not that we shouldn't help those people with only three fingers but we need to look out for number one- West Springfield."

The president also runs the club with a more relaxed schedule, or lack of one.

"There are no rules," said Mahoney. "People ask me what time it's over and I'm like 'I don't care.' [The club's goal] is to be in this school and this

environment and not have to worry about anything...except gundrop houses."

Building gundrop houses and then, of course, destroying them was the HMSC's first activity together. The only survivor is the house that was voted to be the best and was on display in sponsor Bradley Swain's classroom.

"The gundrops were your problems and the toothpicks were your solutions and you were supposed to put them together," said Mahoney.

On December 20, the Happy Morning Sunshine Club gathered in Spartan Hall to listen to a guest speaker talk about building airplanes and, in April, the club plans to wear T-shirts in celebration of their original holiday "Have a Shiny

Day" Day.

Vice President of the Happy Morning Sunshine Club, sophomore Levi Barraclough, explains how the club comes up with its inventive ideas.

"[The ideas] just pop up," said Barraclough. "The first meeting we just started shouting out stuff that we felt like doing and then we go out and do it."

Senior Helen McCarthy first joined the club because she was friends with Mahoney but she is now a strong and supportive Happy Morning Sunshiner.

"There is no least favorite part [of the club]," said McCarthy. "I really enjoy the company and I think it's promoting something good. It also might get me into college because I actually

wrote my college essay [for Emerson College] on the Happy Morning Sunshine Club."

Mahoney hopes that his club will continue on after he graduates but he is not optimistic since the group has parental support but no financial backing.

"We haven't taken a single dime from any of our members," said Mahoney.

Mahoney has also tried to encourage his friends at the other schools to organize a Happy Morning Sunshine Club but it looks like it will remain unique to WS.

"I've been trying to get it started in other schools but they think it's a cult," said Mahoney. "But we aren't. We are all just happy people."

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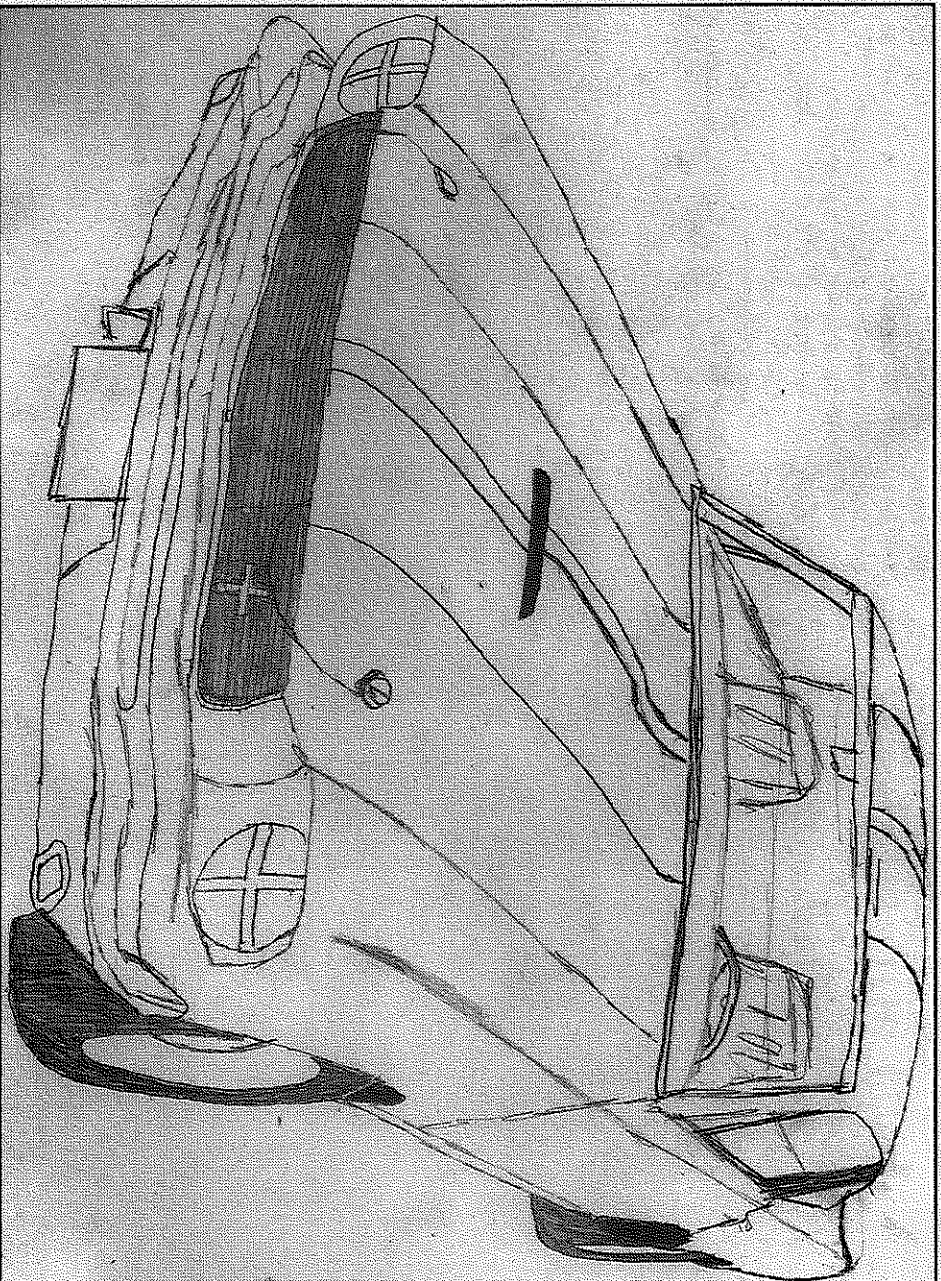
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Gajindra Surujpaul, junior

Harry Potter Nerd Rap

Yo I'm a Harry Potter nerd and that's a fact
 Read the books from the hardcore streets of Fairfax
 Know all the spells and enchantments to the max
 And in Harry Potter world I can turn you into a frog just like that
 So
 I'm a true wizard gangsta
 Rappin' it down bringin' jealous to the Hogwarts playa hahas
 Those wannabes wanna be like me
 I own all the movies special edition on DVD
 Tryin' to know every Potter fact of yes they wishin'
 As I'm walkin' on by with my phoenix feather wand 13 inches
 Oh yes
 And I'm so sorry if you're missin' out just cause you can find me in any wizard crowd
 But I don't mean to be cold
 Spinnin' on my 36 inch rims firebolt
 And so
 I own every collectors edition
 When a movie comes out I'm first in admission
 I re-read every book like I'm on a mission
 I know it's fake but to me it's non-fiction
 Penny Short*



Elisabeth Havinga, sophomore

* pen name for WS sophomore

No Regrets

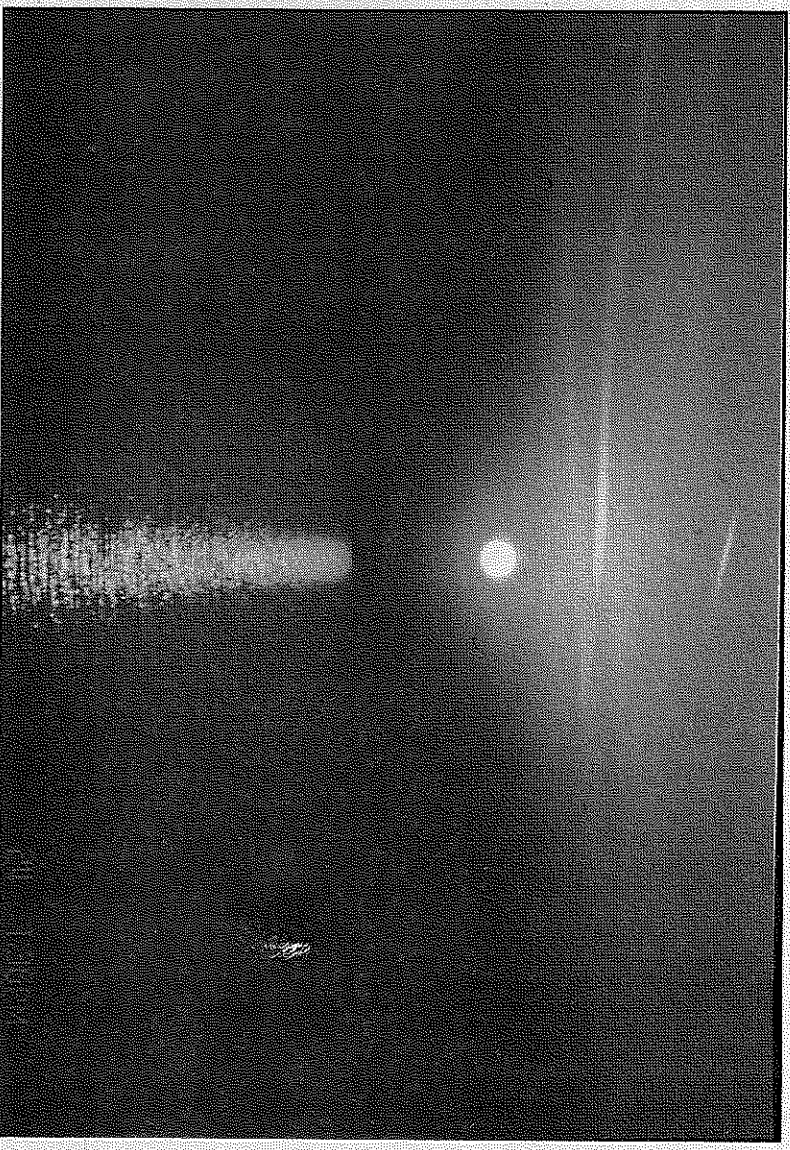
Through all these years
 Going through all the tears
 Of break ups and being upset
 Love will come through I bet
 Please have no regrets

All the time you spent with me
 But inside of me you still can't see
 I always loved you so true
 Going through hard times with you
 I wish I had no regrets too

I wish I can
 Forget you ran
 So far away
 From me each day
 Having no regrets and nothing to say

You were my lovely girl
 With those pretty curls
 Gone away for good
 Now I just wish I could
 Have no regrets like you would

Dave Hogan, junior



Allie Yateo, sophomore

There is no reward.
 No ending pleasure.
 Nothing desired.
 No new love to burn.
 We drag our minds through the tragic
 endless Forest.
 No escape.
 Trapped in one on-going maze
 Filled with poisonous words and altered
 thoughts.
 We know what is happening.
 Do we do anything?
 Is there anything to be done?
 Why do we accept lies?
 Why do we accept the obviously
 confused?
 Why do we accept pain?
 We seek the pleasure pain.
 We seek dark in the light.
 The one who takes us down the beaten
 path.
 Why?

Stevie Fiorino, senior



Gajindra Surujpaul, junior

Freshman sets swimming goals for future

By Rebecca Naramore
Forum Editor

Everyone has his own childhood dreams. Something that he could accomplish with years of hard work. But for Freshman John Trope his dream may be coming sooner than most.

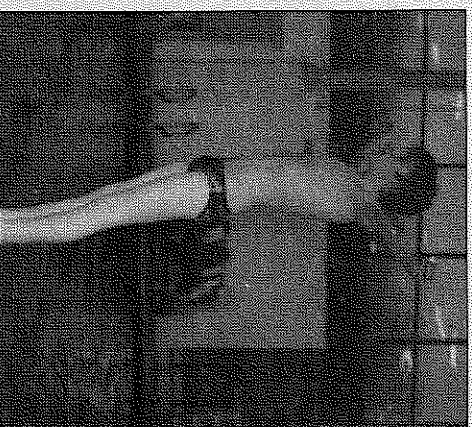
Diving since he was four, Trope has been at the pool practicing his flips and spins for ten years.

"I didn't get attracted to it [on my own]," said Trope. "My mom put me on the team after I ran off the [diving] board and did a flip."

From there, he joined a summer team at Rolling Hills Swim Club. Trope also dives for Patriot Dive Club and the WS team.

When Trope first joined the WS team, others were skeptical. Rumors had been floating around that a great freshman diver was coming. No one believed it could be this little red headed boy.

"I couldn't believe he was the diver everyone was talking about," said sophomore Mary Ellen Spooner, a member of the high school swim team. When she first saw Trope she didn't think much; that was until she saw him dive.



Trope has been diving since he was four and looks forward to the Olympics.

"I am glad he's here," said Erika Babel, a Junior on the WS Dive team, who has known Trope since he began diving at Rolling Hills Swim Club. Knowing Trope's abilities, Babel says that he should be getting good scores at his meets. So far he has placed first in two



Lifeguard

of the four meets, getting second in the other two.

Trope wants to do well for the high school team, but he also has bigger goals.

"I want to go to the Olympics," said Trope.

But before Trope gets there, he must first make it to Nationals.

"I was so close," said Trope, referring to last years qualifying meet. He has never been to Nationals before, although he has been to the All Stars for the Northern Virginia Swim League and has placed between first and third for six years now.

Trope is not discouraged by just missing the Nationals cut; it only makes him want to work harder to become the best.

"The hardest thing about dive is overcoming the mental obstacles of a new dive," said Trope. "But it is the most rewarding experience when you perfect the dive and get high scores."

Baggies get a hold of the goods as a new WS policy

By Libby Bursley
Oracle Editor

This year, the administration has got students' high tech devices in the bag – literally.

Teachers confiscating cell phones and iPods are nothing new, but the protocol for the process has changed since last year.

"[The items] were moved from a closet in the main office to the vault," said Principal David Smith.

This new policy, instated in September, requires teachers to place the confiscated item into a plastic bag and then bring it to the main office, where it is placed in a box in the "vault." The vault has always been in the office, but is just now being used to hold the items. There the cell phones and other various items are kept and locked up, until a parent is able to pick it up after school.

In the vault, devices are placed in a box containing manila folders for each grade level. The freshmen have the most technology confiscations, with a total of nine at this point in time.

"Early on we were picking [items] up all over the place," said Smith. "We're still seeing them, but now students are understanding the consequences."

The teachers have been watchful over their classes to make sure the devices are not causing distractions. "If I see students with hands under their desks, it's pretty obvious," said history teacher Ronald Maggiano. "I've collected two phones in the past two weeks."

The consequences can be greater for students when mix-ups occur. This year, two confiscated items have been lost. One of those times, the item was bagged and made it to the office, but somehow disappeared in that timeframe.

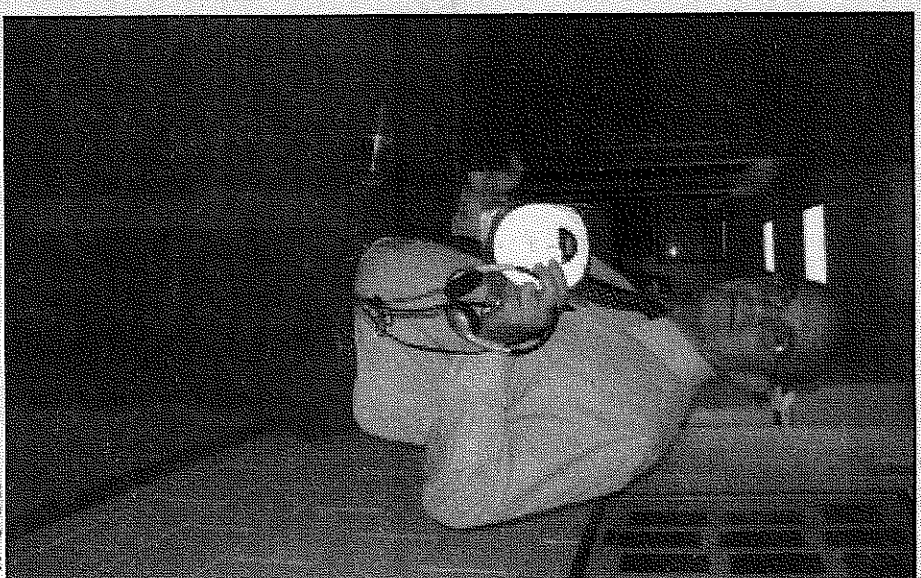
Junior Omar Almaraz went through another problem with his confiscation.

"During the announcements one morning my girlfriend, who was sick that day, texted me. My phone was on vibrate and it was on top of my calculator or something and it was the loudest buzz ever," said Almaraz.

The problem started after his phone was bagged by the teacher and turned into the main office. Because of the hours she works, his mom could not come by after school to pick it up for him.

"It was hard for me to tell my mom to leave work just to get my phone," said Almaraz.

Most teachers follow the procedures for confiscating devices, while also trying to be fair to students.



Molly Cushing

Dr. David Smith has a hold on confiscated goods.

"If it's a flagrant violation [of the rules], I have to confiscate it," said Maggiano. "Students have to know that we take this seriously."

Morning Music lightens up the mood

By Lindsay Bruhn
Senior Staff Writer

Wake up, drive to school and sit in the car for about 30 minutes waiting to enter the prison that is school. There are those who walk, get dropped off or even ride the bus. Thankfully, there are many ways to relax during your commute in the mornings before a day full of quizzes, tests and note taking commences.

Listening to the radio is the most common way students unwind before classes start. Choices range from the incredibly hilarious to the spiritually uplifting like 91.9 which offers different sermons every morning by various pastors.

"Elliot in the Morning" is one of the more popular shows. The crude humor and disturbing topics are sometimes offensive.

"I heard them asking for callers to tell them which child they would choose to save, their biological child or their

adopted child," said senior Ally Campo. "I was upset."

Some students would rather listen to music in the morning instead of the political or social banter.

"I hook my iPod up to my radio with my iPod and dance my way to school," said senior Jessica Lawrie. "Music puts me in a good mood."

There are also those who are still forced to ride the bus

"Since nobody talks on the bus I listen to music because it's better than sitting in the silence," said freshman Alya Shearer.

So whether it's Elliot and his crazy antics or your own personal soundtrack, there are many ways to prepare yourself each morning for your educational experience.

Of course once the day starts, all music stops.

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elliott

IN THE MORNING

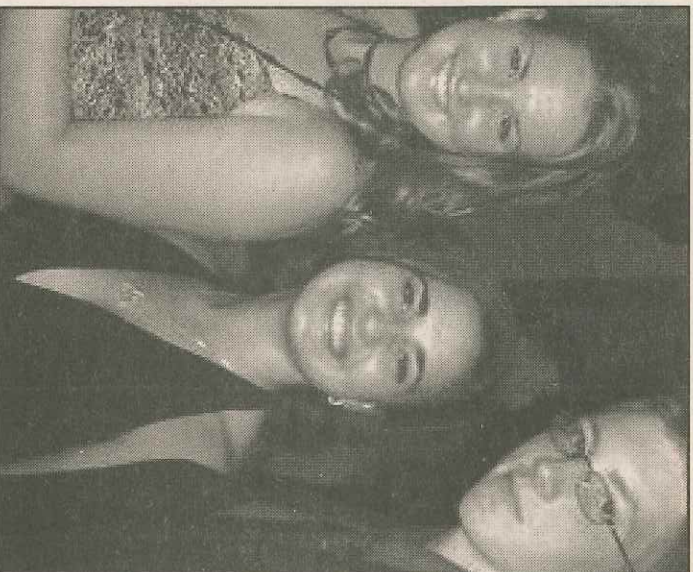
elliptical

The "Elliot in the Morning" show can occasionally offend daily listeners but is better known for brightening up peeples' mornings.

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Amy McGeogor

Seniors Devon Buckley, Alex Flammia and Matt Greene celebrate Buckley's sixteenth birthday at the Springfield Country Club in 2005.

Balloons are just the beginning

By Jimmy Bradshaw
Sophomore Staff Writer

Parties have long been the way to celebrate a birthday or a happy time with your friends, but parties are no longer just being celebrated with family and a couple friends. Now, the party trend has turned the corner from the small friend and family gatherings to the big expensive banquets.

Here at WS, students are organizing creative, out of the ordinary parties, that require hours of planning and deep wallets to cover.

One of the popular locations that parties have been held at is the Springfield Country Club, which was host to the end of season football banquet, senior Devon Buckley's party, and many other students' birthday parties.

The football banquet was for all three teams, freshman, Junior Varsity and Varsity required a formal dress code, meaning that all the boys would have to wear ties and slacks.

"The party was great, I just didn't like how we had to dress up in ties and khakis," said junior Cuong Le.

"We're football players, so we shouldn't have to dress up."

On the other side, junior Dave Hogan believed that the party was a great end to the season and the Country Club was a great place to have it at.

"Dressing up was cool, and the party was great, said Hogan.

Buckley also threw a party at the Country Club. "I decided to have the party there because of its good atmosphere," said Buckley. "The party was a little pricey, but it was worth it."

"We're football players, so we shouldn't have to dress up."

—Cuong Le, junior

Senior Caroline Nicholson was another student who held a big party. The unusual thing about her party, was that the theme was a scavenger hunt.

"I wanted to have a scavenger hunt theme, because its unique, but at the same time its fun," said Nicholson.

Senior Alex Flammia has been to Brion's and recalled her experience.

"The Mason spirit was really high because its right across the street from GMU, and you can even use Mason money there," said Flammia.

Perhaps the only flaw in an otherwise excellent restaurant was food that was admittedly mediocre. It was decent, just not on par with the other aspects of the restaurant. This can be easily overlooked however, because Brion's more than makes up for a so-so meal.

Brion's is definitely a restaurant that everyone who lives in the area should go to. You may not get a five star meal, but you will definitely walk away with a smile on your face.

"I really enjoyed my trip there. I loved the sports atmosphere," said Flammia.

Dyin' for Brion's

By Aaron Snow
Senior Staff Writer

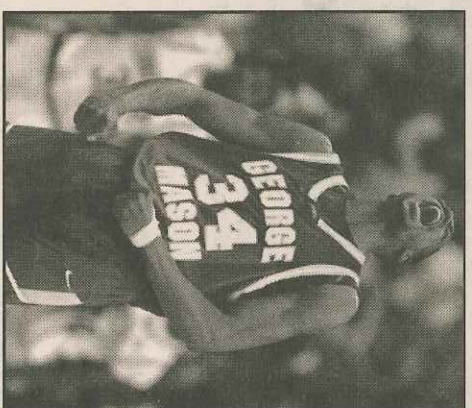
Brion's Grill, a restaurant renowned for its friendly atmosphere and affiliation with George Mason University, is worthy of all of the hype.

Located directly across from the Mason campus Brion's distinguishes itself from other restaurants in the area with its strong Mason Patriot spirit. Its walls are lined with Mason memorabilia and photographs, and it is even largely staffed by GMU students.

Brion's is divided up into sections with a bar at the front and several

different rooms designed to host large parties occupying the remaining space. These rooms lend themselves well to a restaurant whose primary concern is attracting college students ready to socialize after a day of classes.

Apart from its close ties to GMU, Brion's also boasts excellent service, ample seating and plenty of parking. The employees are all very friendly, creating an inviting atmosphere second to none. As an added bonus, I was even seated next to GMU head basketball coach Jim Larenega, who gained fame after a trip to the NCAA final four last season. Larenega and other staff members at GMU frequent



Double-A-Zone

Brion's Grille is a popular spot to watch the George Mason basketball games.

the restaurant as often as their student counter parts.

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Wrestlers grapple the competition Athletes pin down harsh stereotypes

By Katie Costello
Oracle Editor

Wrestlers at WS have to fight both on and off the mat as they battle harsh stereotypes in addition to tough opponents.

The unhealthy habits wrestlers have had in the past, such as not eating for days before a meet to make their weight class for a match, are not as common today as they used to be.

"We just keep our calorie intake down and exercise," said senior Bob Toner. "We don't do any of those extremes. But it [wrestling] is still hard."

Although taking dangerous measures to keep weight down may not be a problem at WS, the sport is still associated with unhealthy dieting.

"One of the stereotypes that surrounds wrestling comes from the taboos of weight loss," said wrestling coach Gary Embrey. "Wrestling has evolved where you have very few abuses of weight managing."

Another stereotype wrestlers have had to struggle with is the belief that wrestling is purely a physical sport.

"You have to have the mental ability," said Toner. "When you're trying to cut weight, trying to win, trying to get that last point, it's important."

This capability is essential to the sport, especially if a wrestler is discouraged.

Sibling rivalries are more than simple arguments

Competing brothers and sisters battle it out on and off the field

By Stephanie Maxwell
News Editor

September was quickly approaching and the idea of starting high school was frightening. For me, however, it would be easier. My sister was at WS paving my road to success.

Try-outs for a school team are scary, especially if you do not know the coach. With an older sibling already on the team it is not nearly as frightening. I knew she was swimming right beside me to help me make it through try-outs. Not to mention the coach who already knew who I was and expected the best from me.

"There is a little pressure to live up to what my sisters have done, but I like [being on the same team] because they are always there to support me."

—Anna Barber
freshman

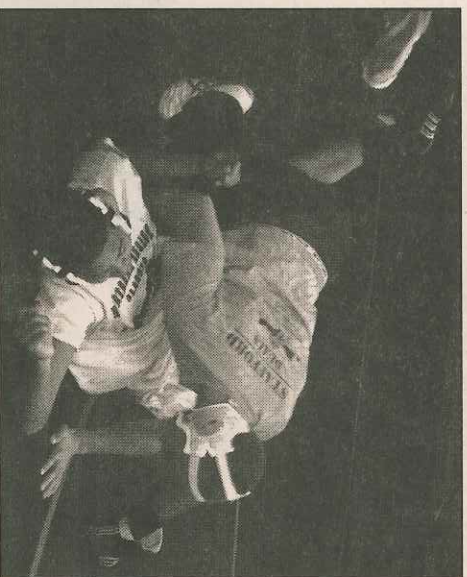
It may seem like it would be bad to have a sibling on the same team, who you are constantly being compared to, but it is not. The only competition between you and your sibling is what you put there yourself. Mostly your sibling is just there for mental support.

"There is a little pressure to live up to what my sisters have done," said

"Once you lose, you have to be strong mentally to get third place," said junior Danny McCluskey.

Those that do not participate in the sport view wrestling as merely a few minutes of grappling with someone in the ring. It involves much more, as frequent practices and time consuming tournaments take up a good portion of wrestlers' lives outside of school.

"Every athlete that has wrestled will tell you it's the most grueling high school sport they have ever



Senior Tim Schmidt attempts to pin senior Joey Ibanez during a recent wrestling practice. The team endures three-hour long practices every weekday.

freshman Anna Barber, "but I like [being on the same team] because they are always there to support me."

Although it is easier on the younger sibling, it is sometimes harder for the older sibling.

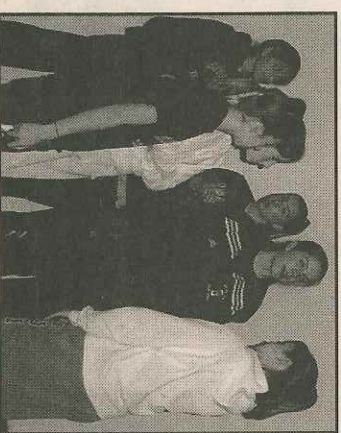
"At first I did not want [my sister] to run because it was my thing, but now I am glad she did because it brought us closer together," said senior Katie Barber.

Everyone, however, does not share this feeling of unity with their siblings. Matt Collier was a senior on the WS swim and dive team last year. This year he has came back to coach the team. His

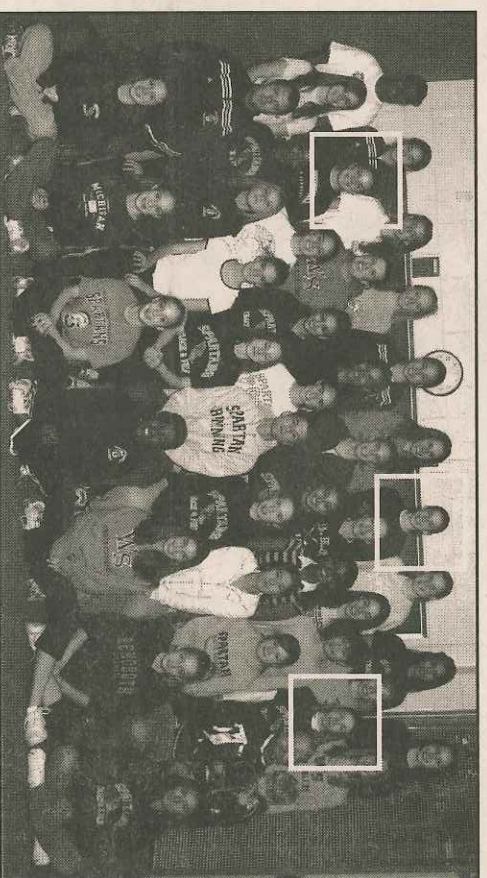
Commentary

sister, sophomore Meagan Collier does not feel the comfort of having an older sibling on the team.

"Let's just say I love my brother," said Meagan Collier, "but if he is the coach this year I am not joining the team."



At a meet, Katie Barber, middle, talks to her teammates as sister freshman Anna Barber, front left, watches her.



Senior Katie Barber, junior Rosemary Barber, and freshman Anna Barber are not only sisters, but all three run winter track.

Your sexual health matters

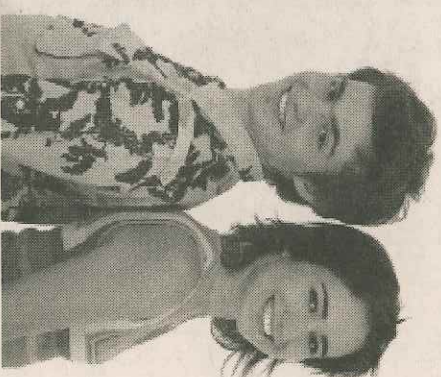
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issues



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(across from GMU next to University Mall)

Girls Varsity Basketball shoots for success in new season

By Bethel Habte
News Editor

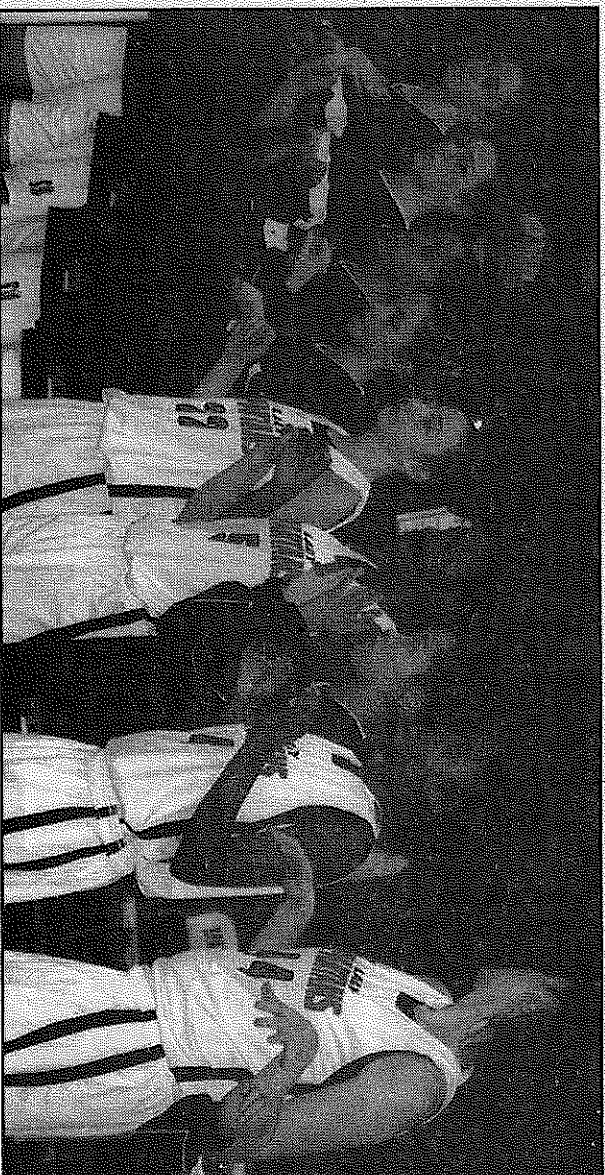
Bill Gibson rode a knife through tape that sealed a tattered brown box. The contents inside: royal blue hoodies with bold orange print reading "LADY SPARTANS".

Another varsity girl's basketball season has begun for Coach Gibson and the ladies.

The opening season game proved to be a challenge. They played Edison HS, who were awarded second place in states last year and who ranked number six in the country by *USA Today*. They were intimidating opponents for the girls.

Junior Lauren Massie had ways of coping beforehand.

"You try not to think about it because you kind of



The Lady Spartans are optimistic about the new season, even though they lost to Edison their first game.

psych yourself out," she said. "[We] just pretend like it's any other game."

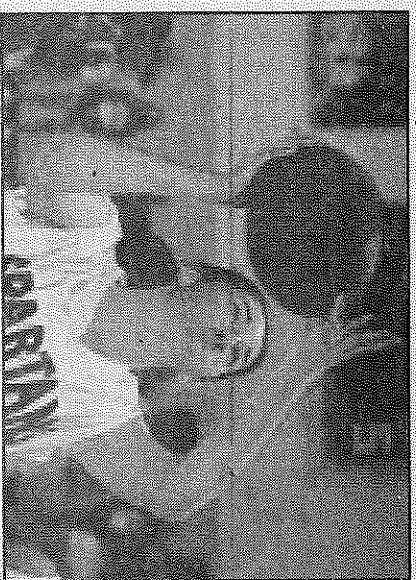
At halftime, the Lady Spartans were leading 22-13. Things were looking up. However the final score, disappointedly, ended up 39-55 Edison.

"They're still kind of a young team and it got to us I guess," said senior Trahana Harris.

But the team is confident that they will be able to beat Edison by the end of the season.

"Hopefully [next time] we'll play all 32 minutes good and stay focused all through the game," said freshman Melanie Todd, eighth grade manager of the team last year and the only freshman on the varsity team this year.

Other key opponents in the season include South County and T.C. Middle. South County has one Division one player, so



Senior Caroline Nicholson (left) and Junior Lauren Massie (right) take shots during a game. The team plans to work towards winning Districts and Regionals.

"We all work hard, we all have the same goals to win Districts, go into Regionals and do better than last year. I think if we just play as a team we can beat anyone."
— Trahana Harris, senior



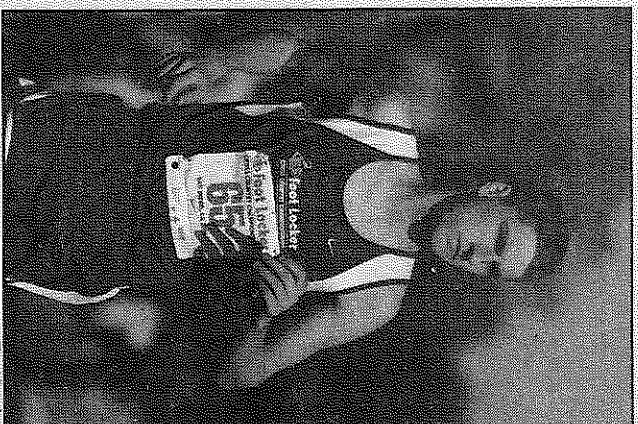
Lifetouch

Spooner places 23rd in Nationals

By Inderbir Bal
Business/Systems Editor

Mike Spooner placed 23rd in Nationals but the road to Nationals was a difficult one.

Spooner finally made it to Nationals after placing 5th in the Foot Locker Southern Region Championship race, in



Senior Mike Spooner competes in the Foot Locker Southern Region Race.

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Charlotte, North Carolina. For the past two years Spooner has been sick, but this year he was healthy and qualified.

"It feels pretty good because I wanted this since my freshman year and it's a really big step for running," said Spooner.

Spooner trained with his coaches by simulating different areas of the course so could do his best at Nationals.

"Balboa Park in San Diego has two tough hills on the course; we have been focusing on his hill technique and perseverance," said Head Coach Vic Kelbaugh. Spooner missed some important practices but both Spooner and the coaches felt that he was ready for the race.

Spooner believes he has been improving through the years because he has the determination and will to get better and try harder.

"Spooner has speed, stamina and determinations required to be a good

runner," said Kelbaugh. Spooner made it to regions the past two years but, because he was sick, he could not go on, which now motivates him to do better.

Spooner said that making it to Nationals was more important than winning.

Kelbaugh agrees that just making it was a major accomplishment for him and he said that if he places in the top half that it would be great. His parents supported him all the way and they are excited he went to nationals.

"They know that I worked really hard to get where I am and they keep me focused," said Spooner.

Spooner placed 23rd and his time was 16:03 and he feels it was an extraordinary way to finish off his senior year. He feels proud that he has competed with the best athletes from across the US. "It is a rare circumstance under the title of WS," said Spooner.

Happy New Year
Class of 2007

Jake Disagrees Holiday gift guide 2007: Homeless/ toothless edition

By Jake Serwin
Etc. Editor



Barbara Buckland

At some point during the glorious week between Christmas and New Year's (who doesn't love Kwanzaa? I certainly don't not love Kwanzaa), I visited San Francisco.

'Twas a beautiful day: the sun was shining, the birds were singing, the cable cars were narrowly avoiding tourist children. We (myself and several persons related to me) were walking down by the wharves, returning to the car after a long day of chowders in bread bowls and men in matching sweaters.

Up ahead, a distinctly fake-looking tree branch was leaning against a streetlamp. This was unusual compared to the nudeness of all the other poles, but I thought little of it.

As we approached, the branch fell away to reveal a man both homeless and toothless, "HYEEARRRRGH" at us in a very loud and toothless voice. Quite understandably, we were terrified. The dentally-challenged tree man ignored our shrieks of terror and said,

"Gotta pay the man, sir," pointing to himself and a coffee tin on the ground (that was surprisingly not empty).

To pop out at innocent tourists from behind a plastic tree branch is disturbing enough, but to demand compensation for such service is unquestionably pushing one's luck. We declined to pay the man, sir.

Something about the experience, traumatic as it was, stuck with me. My plastic plant friend was smiling quite contently. Toothless though he was, I

could see his joy. He was the happiest homeless man I have ever seen, certainly the happiest I've refused to pay. This gave me an idea. Next Kwanzaa, or other gift-giving holiday, why not gift your local dwelling-free-American with a fake tree branch? With plastic leaves in hand, your neighborhood street person can screech like a punted wolverine at passersby and presumably make good money. Even if it isn't practical, it looks like a lot of fun.

To pop out at innocent tourists from behind a plastic tree branch is disturbing enough, but to demand compensation for such service is unquestionably pushing one's luck.

Such a gift could even raise the recipient's status from dwelling-free to dwelling-full: with a lamppost on one side and a plastic plant on the other, you've got yourself a tent.

The 2007 holiday season is a scant eleven months away. Get a head start and give the gift of terror. While you're at it, you could replace the pants I was wearing.

4) Don't exercise:

Warning: If used in combination with #10, you might not make it to the next New Year. But if you're going to do it, take one of your grandparents' motorized scooters. Those things look like fun.

3) Put yourself in as many

stressful situations as possible:

Take as many difficult classes as possible, work four or five jobs, play seven sports and date two or three really mean people. All at the same time.

2) Get really terrible grades:

This would not be one of the more helpful things you could do for your future. Unless you want to live in your parents' basement and play World of Warcraft all day when you're 35.

1) Make a New Year's Resolution:

By, let's say, June, how many people even remember what their New Year's resolution was? Not that many. You might as well quit while you're ahead.

10) Eat more junk food:

This is not the healthiest way to go through another year. Going from Super-sized fries to medium fries doesn't count as eating healthier either, it's still McBadforyou.

9) Be really, really messy:

As teenagers, we're expected to have a messy room, locker, car and anything else that's ours. Cleaning up after ourselves would be completely ridiculous.

8) Spend money as often as possible:

Since college, cars, and homes aren't expensive or really important or anything like that.

7) Do nothing except talk on

AIM and watch television:

A month or so after you start doing this, u'll b tkin lyke dis and become very sensitive to sunlight.

—Compiled By Cam McCallum

TOP TEN WORST New Year's Resolutions

6) Depend on your parents for everything:

While this may result in your mom and dad putting you up for adoption, it could also help you take on more than one of these New Year's Resolutions. You know, if you're feeling really ambitious.

5) Spend less time with family and friends:

To go along with the theme of this list, doing this will probably lead to your eventual depression and generally make your life worse.



JANUARY '07



Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
12 Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Hayfield @ 7:15 p.m. (home)	13 Printing Ink Week begins	14 National Clean Off Your Desk Day	15 School Closed- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	16 Girls Varsity Basketball vs. T.C. Williams @ 7:30 p.m. (home)	17 Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (1929-1968)	18 Maintenance Day
19 Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Lake Braddock @ 7:30 p.m. (home)	20 SAT (not at WSHS)	21 Varsity Wrestling- Hayfield, Lee, W. Pot @ WSHS @ 1:00p.m.	22 Answer Your Cat's Question Day	23 Boys Varsity Basketball vs. West Potomac @ 7:15 p.m. (home)	24 New issue of <i>The Oracle</i>	25 School Closed- Teacher Work Day